



## The Airport Safety Council celebrates their first anniversary

December 15 marked the actual date of the first anniversary of the Airport Safety Council of the Reina Beatrix International of Aruba, but the council members after their regular meeting, with members of the press invited to join in celebrated it on Wednesday, December 21. The meeting of the council was held in the AAA boardroom and press members were treated to enlightening peek into the working and concerns of the many airline company and government representatives that make up the council.

Welcoming the company was Mauricio Boekhoudt, Committee Chairman, and Peter Steinmetz, Director of the Airport. Mr. Steinmetz had some comments regarding airport safety, in particular what is termed "Airside Safety" the sections of an airport that is populated with the planes and the attending equipment. He gave a brief history into the beginnings of Aruba's air service, which started on December 15, 1934 with the first airlifts that came from Holland and serviced both Curacao and Aruba. On that same day of the month the Aruba Airport Authority founded the Safety Council one year ago. The members meet monthly to discuss and plan the necessary solutions to see to the safety and security of the Reina Beatrix Airport. Currently, most of the traveling public has on their minds possible terrorism when they think of airport safety, but the true concerns of airport authorities are much more mundane and crucial. The fact that an airport is an area abundant with unique elements that have the potential for disaster, such as a variety of high energy resources, is much more on the minds of airport executives. Other concerns, such as the use of non-standard language, problems with radio reception, non-adherence to procedures, and the simple fact that planes are delicate, with the complexity of the airport environment contributes towards creating an atmosphere where there is the potential for an accident. It is because of the constant vigilance required to prevent this, that the Safety Council was created.

Keynote for the morning's meeting was Ineka Lampe, Country Manager in Aruba for American Airlines. Her presentation that morning was about "Practical Airside Safety," which illustrated the varying ways in which plans can be damaged by support equipment such as baggage loaders, and the prevention required. A new poster for all plane handlers was distributed, to be displayed about the airside section of the airport and in all airline employee facilities. It focuses on personal safety and safety gear that all airport workers should be conscientious about deploying.

The morning ended on a very positive note as this was the occasion for the rewarding of two certificates of outstanding achievement to Eric Martijn and Andrey Lopez, who have recently completed a course of study at the International Airline Transport Association (IATA) Development Institute in Miami, Florida. Both men weathered a devastating hurricane and finished with exceptional honors, to bring their knowledge back to Aruba and to see to its practical applications. Eric Martijn explained the categories of safety laid down by the FAA and ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization with which an airport must comply. These categories range from the highest standards, which is a category one, and the lowest, which is a category four. Aruba's Airport Authority has earned a category one ranking, but, in actuality, has gone beyond the requirements of the FAA in their maintenance of safety and security standards as is required by ICAO.

Congratulations to the council members on their first anniversary, and a sincere thank you from the traveling public for maintaining a facility with the highest standards of safety>